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2014 Governor's Range Tour will highlight sustainable grazing practices in Mission Valley

RONAN, Mont. – This year's Governor's Range Tour will provide a great opportunity for producers, range professionals and the general public to see and discuss sustainable grazing practices while visiting a number of Mission Valley livestock operations.

The two-day event begins on Thursday, Sept. 4, 2014, and concludes on Friday, Sept. 5.

"This year's tour will focus on improving pasture conditions and financial returns," said Chris Malgren, administrator of the Lake County Conservation District. "We're highlighting a number of area ranches using innovative grazing strategies."

The first day of the tour will open with a presentation on grazing techniques and holistic pasture management by Ben Montgomery and Justin Morris, both with the

Montana Natural Resources Conservation Service. Following the presentation, tour participants will visit three ranches to hear their success stories using intensive and high stock density pasture grazing. The first is David Sturman's operation, which uses mob grazing with sheep, while the second and third properties, owned by brothers Vern and Dennis Schlabach, respectively, showcase improved pasture conditions and forage production on their properties from the use of mob grazing with cattle.

Day one of the tour will conclude with a discussion at Jake Yoder's ranch regarding the value of cattle grazing weeds, and improving animal condition and calf weights by making improvements in grazing management on a degraded hay field. There will also be a body condition scoring workshop with Rachel Endecott, MSU Beef Cattle Extension Specialist.

"This scoring demonstration will offer a great way for producers to quickly and accurately gauge livestock health and nutritional status in the field," said Malgren.

Day one of the tour will conclude with a banquet at the Ninepipes Lodge. Ray Beck, DNRC Deputy Director, will serve as Master of Ceremonies and Governor Steve Bullock (invited) is the scheduled keynote speaker.

Day two of the tour will feature an electric fencing demonstration and workshop. Montgomery and Morris will review the different materials, layout options, and discuss tips and techniques for making temporary fencing easy and effective.

The Governor's Range Tour is an annual DNRC-sponsored event that rotates around the state, highlighting excellence and innovation in production agriculture and natural resource stewardship.

"The tour is an excellent opportunity for landowners, the general public and resource management folks to discuss issues and share experiences," said Jim

Simpson, Lake County Conservation District Supervisor. "We're excited to be hosting it this year and hope to see plenty of people come out."

Registration for the tour begins at 8:30 a.m. on Sept. 4 at the Amish Community Center, located on the corner of Allison and Foothills roads just outside of St. Ignatius, Mont.

Full registration costs \$40.00 and includes the tour, lunch and banquet; the tour and lunch only costs \$15.00, while a ticket for the banquet only is \$30.00. Registration is available on the day of the event, but pre-registration is encouraged.

For more information on this year's Governor's Range Tour, contact Chris Malgren, Ben Montgomery or Heidi Crum (contact information at top of this release).

To download a poster and registration form, visit the Montana DNRC Web site at <http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/cardd/consdist/rangelandmanagement.asp> or the DNRC Rangeland Resources Program Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MontanaRangeProgram>

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